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SUBJECT: Status Report on OSS Ground Photography

1. The Agency Archives is housing 607 cubic feet of OSS Ground Photography. This collection contains 417 feet of photographs, 121 feet of negatives and 69 feet of captions, receipts, source cards and related records.

2. This collection of photos was begun in OSS during June 1942 and continued until the OSS was terminated October 1945. The four primary sources for these photos were: the public, photographic news agencies, [REDACTED] and commercial companies. 25X1C

3. After the termination of OSS the photos were transferred to the Department of State where they remained until they were transferred to CIA in December 1947. Apparently there was little or no interfiling in this collection during the time it was at the Department of State. In one of the memos concerning the transfer to CIA, State indicated that they did not consider the collection of sufficient value to warrant the expense of keeping it up to date.

4. After the transfer to CIA in 1947, the collection was housed in Central Reference (then OCD) until it was retired to the Records Center in 1953. In early 1960 the responsibility for this collection was transferred to DDP/RI (OSS) from OCR/GR (Photo Branch).

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The collection was given a new job number but remained housed in the Records Center.

5. In 1968 the Records Center was filled to capacity and the records purge was begun to make space available for the more important records. In October 1968 CRS replied to an inquiry from DDP/RI that they had no interest in these files. CRS reaffirmed this during March 1969 in a memo from the Director/CRS to CIA/RMO.

STATINTL

Also in March 1969 [REDACTED] (Chief, RID and Director SSU) in memo to Chief, Geography Division, OBG, stated "The Office of the General Counsel informs us that there is no legal impediment to the destruction of these records and that they may be destroyed in accordance with established procedures.

STATINTL

6. Since no clear instructions on the disposition of this collection were available at that time, [REDACTED] Chief of the Archives and Records Center, instructed his deputy in a memo dated 22 May 1969 to transfer the entire collection to the Agency Archives.

STATINTL

7. While [REDACTED] was attending a full-time training program with NARS in early 1973, one of the specific questions asked was, "I understand that NARS has taken the position that the Agency must retain permanently all photographs in its possession. Clarification is needed. It is difficult to believe that the Agency should be responsible for the preservation of photographs, e.g., that were purchased from news services or acquired from the United Nations." His notes on the above read as follows: "NARS would still like to get all still photos. It is a

question, however, whether we would ever be in a position to transfer them unless there is a drastic change of mission. NARS would want the collection intoto, including the indices rather than piecemeal items.

8. When NARS appraises this collection for accessioning into the National Archives it should have access to the entire collection including negatives and background papers. The GSA Regulation (GSA Reg. 3-IV-303.08) on accessioning of still photographs reads as follows: "Still Photographs. A negative and a captioned print (whether of film, glass, paper, or other medium) of each still photographic image are necessary for security, duplication, and use by the National Archives, and such copies, when available, shall be included in collections of still photographs offered for transfer."

9. Of the 417 cubic feet of photographs, approximately 15 percent of these photos are labeled CIA. This file is arranged by area and there are some CIA photos in almost all areas. The summer employees were used to separate these during 1973, but only about half the collection (207 cubic feet) have been completed to date. (I would assume the same percentage would hold true for the negatives also, but they have not been checked.)

10. The file arrangement for this collection is the same as is used today in the NPIC Ground Photo collection. The requester uses the photo collection, which is arranged by subject and area, to locate the desired photo. The photo has a number stamped on it which is the negative number. The desired negative is then pulled from a numerical file and a duplicate print is made.